Department of State TELEGRAM

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INFO SSO 00,NSCE 00,DODE 00,CIAE 00,USIE 00,NSAE 00,CCO 00,SP 02,
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O R 061320Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4128
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3699
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2100
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG 685

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Zemba DATE 10/6/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (3)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
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UNCLAS SAIGON 2473

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

1. VNAF AIRCRAFT CARRYING PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN PARTIES TO QUANG TRI CITY TODAY ON FIRST LEG OF CAMPAIGN TRAIL WERE PREVENTED FROM LANDING AT QUANG TRI CITY AIRPORT BY HIGH CROSS WINDS AND PUT DOWN INSTEAD AT MARINE AIRSTRIP AT DONG HA SOME FIFTEEN KILOMETERS TO THE NORTH. AFTER WAITING FOR SOME TIME CAMPAIGN PARTIES REEMBARKED AND RETURNED TO SAIGON.

2. EMBASSY OFFICERS PRESENT AT QUANG TRI CITY AIRPORT REPORT THAT OFFICIAL DELEGATION AND SPECTATORS (IN ALL ABOUT 500

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PEOPLE) WERE WAITING ON THE GROUND AT QUANG TRI CITY. AIRCRAFT APPEARED, TRIED TO LAND BUT WINDS FORCED THEM AWAY. WELCOMING DELEGATION THEN LEFT FOR DONG HA BUT BEFORE THEY ARRIVED

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THE CAMPAIGN PARTIES HAD DEPARTED. OUR SOURCES SAY CAMPAIGN PARTIES WAITED ONLY ABOUT AN HOUR ON THE GROUND AT DONG HA.

3. JOURNALISTS (UPI, CBS AND REUTERS) WHO ACCOMPANIED CAMPAIGN PARTIES HAVE TOLD US THAT CAMPAIGN PARTIES BECAME INCREASINGLY ANNOYED AT DELAY AT DONG HA. FINALLY MARINES OFFERED TRUCK TRANSPORTATION INTO QUANG TRI CITY BUT SOME CANDIDATES (NOT IDENTIFIED) REFUSED ON GROUNDS IT NOT PROPER FOR THEM TO ACCEPT AMERICAN AID TO CAMPAIGN. PARTIES THEN DEPARTED FOR SAIGON, ACCORDING TO PRESS "MAD AS WET HENS."

4. WE CAN EXPECT A GOOD DEAL OF PRESS SPECULATION THAT GVN ACTED DELIBERATELY TO INCONVENIENCE THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN PARTIES BUT WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INDICATION THAT SUCH WAS THE CASE. IN FACT, ROAD FROM DONG HA TO QUANG TRI IS SUBJECT TO FREQUENT VC HARRASSMENT AND IT IS PROBABLY JUST AS WELL PARTIES DID NOT ATTEMPT THE JOURNEY.
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ORIGIN/ACTION

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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : BANGKOK, DJAKARTA, HONG KONG, KUALA LUMPUR, MANILA, RANGOON, SINGAPORE, TAIPEI, VIENTIANE, CINCPAC FOR POLAD

Date
ANALYSIS BRANCH
Action

FROM : American Embassy SAIGON

DATE: August 7, 1967

Name of

SUBJECT : Overseas Chinese as Factor in Vietnamese Election

REF : A. Saigon 26673; B. Saigon 27775; C. Saigon 28362

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In May of this year, Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky began to mount an unmistakable election campaign among the local overseas Chinese. Ky's campaign was centered around his commitment to return the Chinese congregation properties to Chinese control (Ref. B.), and included a round of well publicized visits to Chinese schools and hospitals (Refs. A and C). As of late June, we felt that Ky's campaign--or, more specifically, his "promises" to return the congregation properties--had been most successful, and that the large majority of the Chinese vote would go to him. Not only did Ky promise (in principle) to return the properties, but also the GVN took--and even now is continuing to take--positive steps to relinquish some of its effective control over the properties, and set in motion a series of actions, the only logical conclusion of which can be the eventual return to the Chinese of full control over their congregation properties.

The situation is obviously different now, with Ky running as a vice-presidential candidate on Nguyen Van Thieu's ticket. Thieu did not identify himself with Ky's commitment concerning the return of the Chinese properties, and he has only recently made even a small attempt to create an image in the Chinese community (by sending his wife to visit Chinese welfare and other organizations). Even so, much of the support which Ky developed through his commitment to return the congregation properties will probably be transferred to the Thieu-Ky ticket. Thieu has in no way repudiated Ky's commitments in this regard, no other candidate has expressed himself on the subject, and it therefore seems likely that most Chinese will

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prefer the incumbents (albeit in changed roles), in the hope that they will continue the enlightened policy toward the Chinese community which has been adopted by the present administration.

There are other, and equally compelling factors which lead one to believe that the Chinese will support the Thieu-Ky ticket. Thieu and Ky represent continuity and stable government--both factors which are highly prized in the Chinese community. Also, Thieu and Ky have proved that they stand for a strong prosecution of the war, and that they can work with the Americans, whereas all of the other candidates are unknown factors in this regard. (A number of local Chinese have asked which candidate the U.S. supports, hoping to hear a confirmation that we are supporting the same candidate they are.)

One Chinese businessman, expressing the views of his group of friends, told the reporting officer with considerable certainty that the Chinese vote will be the determining factor in the election. The way he figures it, 90% of the Chinese will vote, as compared with 75% of the non-Chinese electorate; 75% of the Chinese vote will go to one ticket (Thieu-Ky). On the basis of a total electorate of 5,700,000, of which an estimated 550,000 are Chinese, his conclusion is that Thieu and Ky will receive one bloc of votes (Chinese) amounting to something over 10% of the total number of votes cast.

That represents the view of the big Chinese businessman. Other Chinese have said that there is some sentiment for Tran Van Huong, but this has been stated more as an indication that not all Chinese will vote for Thieu and Ky, rather than as a conviction that large numbers of Chinese will vote for Huong. Our own estimate is that the Chinese vote will not be highly fractionalized. Although some of it may go to Huong, we believe that the large majority of the Chinese vote will go to Thieu and Ky.

Prime Minister Ky appears already to have recognized the importance of a large minority group which has a high degree of community of interest, and thus can be expected to vote as a bloc. If, after the election, it is apparent that the Chinese have in fact voted as a bloc, this may serve to strengthen their position in dealings with the Government.

Given a developing democratic political environment in South Viet Nam, the local overseas Chinese might in the future find themselves the object of a surprising amount of attention from incumbent and aspiring politicians.

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